

3) "less adult male specimen" (O.-Grant, 1906), Gunong Tahan, Malay Peninsula, 8.vi.1905, coll. H. C. Robinson; BMNH 1906.7.23.369. Culmen from skull: 21.5; wing: 164.5; tarsus: 22.5; tail: 105 mm.

*Note:* The first of these 3 birds is the ♂ syntype of *Sphenocercus robinsoni* Ogilvie-Grant 1906; the following 2, also mentioned in the original description, are to be considered paratypes.

*Acknowledgements:* I am particularly indebted to Derek Goodwin (BMNH) for his invaluable help and assistance during my visit to Tring and for his useful comments on the draft of this paper. I am also grateful to Dr. G. F. Mees, for providing me with details about the *etorques* specimen in Leyden Museum, and to the Scientific Staff of Tring, Genoa and New York Museums, for kindly granting me access to their material during my studies.

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*Postscriptum:* Dr. S. Somadikarta, of Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense (MZB), Bogor, Indonesia, kindly informs me (9 November 1980) that "in the collection of MZB there is a pair of *S. etorques* collected by J. J. Mendon from Mt. Dempo (1800m), SW Sumatra, on 12 July 1936. These specimens were, wrongly, labelled as *S. korthalsi*. The adult ♂ specimen from Mt. Dempo (MZB No. 15508) does not show the orange-rufous collar, and the measurements (in mm) are: wing 160, tail 103, bill 17, and tarsus 22."

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## A new subspecies of *Halcyon chloris* from an isolated population in eastern Arabia

by *Graham S. Cowles*

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In March 1971, accompanied by Major M. D. Gallagher, I visited a coastal area of eastern Arabia called Khawr Kalba (also spelt Khor Kelba) which is between the villages of Kalba to the north and Murair to the south, on the Batinah coast in Sharjah State, United Arab Emirates, close to the border of the Sultanate of Oman (Fig. 1,C). The area has been mainly formed by the delta of the Wadi Rumh and is comprised of sand and alluvial mud which supports mangrove swamps at the edges of small inlets close to the sea shore. Here we observed several kingfishers in the mangroves, which at the time appeared similar to the White-collared Kingfisher *Halcyon chloris abyssinica*. Two specimens were collected and preserved as study skins, and are now in the British Museum (Nat. Hist.), Tring.

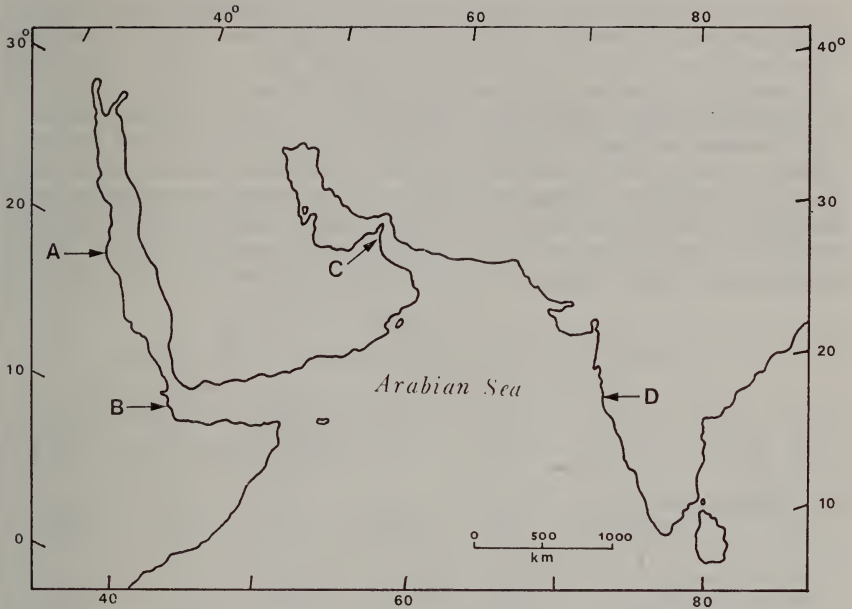


Fig. 1. Distribution of the *Halcyon chloris* subspecies nearest to Arabia. A-B, *abyssinica* (coast at, and between, Suakin and Zeila). C, *kalbaensis* (Khawr Kalba, Arabia). D, *vidali* (Ratnagiri district, Konkan, India).

*Halcyon chloris* was first reported from Arabia by Stanford in 1973, 19 years after Meinertzhagen (1954) wrote 'It is remarkable that no race of *H. chloris* occurs in Arabia'. The kingfisher, a ♀, was actually collected in January 1962 by Lt. Col. W. Stanford, from a mangrove swamp, thought at first to be at Murair but later corrected to Khawr Kalba, the same locality which Gallagher and I visited 9 years later. Stanford's single specimen, now in the B.M. (N.H.), Tring, is similar to and was originally considered to be *H. chloris abyssinica*, a subspecies with a very restricted distribution along part of the Red Sea west coast (Fig. 1, A-B), from Suakin south to Zeila on the western coast of the Gulf of Aden (Peters 1945, Archer & Godman 1961). It is perhaps vagrant to southern Somalia and Kenya (Fry 1978), although this latter record is now in some doubt. With the addition of 2 further specimens from Khawr Kalba, certain constant differences are now evident between the White-collared kingfishers of the Red Sea population and those of eastern Arabia, enough to warrant separating them into 2 subspecies.

#### *Halcyon chloris kalbaensis* subsp. nov.

*Holotype*. Adult ♂, collected 24 March 1971 by G. S. Cowles (collector's number GG181), at Khawr Kalba (25°01'N, 56°22'E), Sharjah State, United Arab Emirates, eastern Arabia. B.M. (N.H.) reg. no. 1977.18.9.

*Description*. Similar to *H.c. abyssinica* but differs in having a well defined white superciliary stripe extending from the sides of the forehead to above and past the eye. Above the ear coverts the white superciliary is suffused with blue-tipped feathers, giving a streaked area of light blue-green and white.

After progressing along the side of the head the superciliary joins the white based feathers of the nape, above the black nuchal band. Bill smaller than *abyssinica*. The black of the lores is noticeably less in area than that of *abyssinica*, almost to the point of being absent. The upper tail coverts and rump are more blue-green than the blue of *H. c. abyssinica* and *H. c. vidali*.

*Measurements.* Table 1 indicates an overlap in the wing and tail measurements of *H. c. kalbaensis* and *H. c. abyssinica*. Additional measurements have been obtained from a collection of wings, tails and heads recently presented to the B.M. (N.H.) by the Harrison Zool. Museum. These were collected by Major C. J. Seton-Browne and taken from specimens shot at Khawr Kalba in June 1968. These help to substantiate measurements from the otherwise

TABLE I  
Measurements (mm) of *Halcyon chloris kalbaensis* and *H. c. abyssinica*

	Wing	Tail	Upper mandible from skull	Lower mandible from symphysis to tip	Max. depth of bill
<i>H. c. kalbaensis</i> Holotype ♂	102.0	68.0	46.0	36.0	11.5
Paratype ♀	98.5	67.0	48.0	37.5	12.5
♀	105.5	65.0	48.0	38.0	12.5
<i>Seton-Browne material</i> (see text) ( <i>kalbaensis</i> )	(n=6)	(n=3)	(n=5)	(n=5)	(n=5)
range	100-106	65-66	46-48 (one 53)	34-37	11.0-12.0
mean	104.5	66.5	48.0	35.5	11.5
<i>H. c. abyssinica</i> ♂	105.0	65.0	50.0	42.0	15.0
♀	105.0	65.0	52.0	43.0	14.0
♀	105.0	67.0	50.0	40.0	14.0
?	105.5	67.0	50.0	41.0	14.0

small series of study skins. The heads of *H. c. kalbaensis* taken in June 1968 support the Table in showing that the bill is smaller than that of *H. c. abyssinica*. A certain amount of annual wear and regrowth apparently takes place in the mandibles of this species. One head from the Seton-Browne material has an exceptionally long bill of 53 mm which appears to be overgrown at the tip of the upper mandible. Others in the series are worn at the tip and cutting edge, but consistently to a length of 47 mm  $\pm$  1 mm.

*Paratypic variation.* Stanford's female has the white collar of the hind neck mottled with black due to immaturity, as described by Mackworth-Præd & Grant (1957).

*Range.* Apparently confined to the coastal mangrove swamps at Khawr Kalba. The nearest population of *H. chloris* is the race *abyssinica*, about 1900 km across Arabia to the southwest, on the western coast of the Red Sea, and *H. c. vidali* in the opposite direction, about 2000 km to the southeast, across the Arabian Sea in the Ratnagiri district, south of Bombay, India (Fig. 1, D). Unlike *H. c. kalbaensis*, *H. c. vidali* has the black nuchal band generally absent, the colour of the wing is a deeper shade of blue and the wing is longer (♂s 110-114 mm). The white supraloral spot is small and the superciliary ill-defined, or in some specimens absent.

*Material examined.* Two ♂s and 1 ♀ from the type locality. These were compared with 1 ♂, 2 ♀s and one unsexed skin of *abyssinica*, and 4 ♂s and 3 ♀s

of *vidali*. Skins of 34 of the 49 subspecies were examined. Descriptions of the remaining 15 not represented in the B.M. (N.H.) were obtained from the literature.

*Etymology.* Named after the village close to the type locality, Kalba.

*Status.* Stanford (1973) recorded the Kalba White-collared Kingfisher as 'local, and not found at similar mangrove habitats elsewhere on the Batinah, or Trucial coast' (United Arab Emirates). The specimens were collected in January, March and June. Stanford (1973) observed it in May and July and it has been seen during most other months of the year; during one day in June 1968 up to 20 individuals were counted at Khawr Kalba by Lt. S. Strickland. There seems little doubt that this is a resident population, and nesting in June is said to have been seen.

*Voice.* Stanford describes the call as a noisy 'Kee-kee-kee', similar to that of a young hawk.

*Food.* The stomach of the holotype contained small crabs.

*Colour of bare parts.* These were noted at the time of death from the 2 ♂s. Iris: dark orange brown. Feet: pale grey. Inside of mouth: pale grey. Bill: upper mandible black; lower mandible black at tip and along cutting edge, the remaining basal two-thirds, grey. The bill colour appears not to have been properly recorded for *H. c. abyssinica*, but in *H. c. vidali* the basal two-thirds of the lower mandible is recorded as pinkish or yellowish-white (Baker 1927, Ali 1970). The grey bill colouring of this isolated Arabian population may therefore be significant. The colour of the feet agree with the 'grey' given by Mackworth-Praed & Grant (1957) for *H. c. abyssinica*, but this is in contrast to the 'dark brown' described by Archer & Godman (1961). Baker (1927 and Ali (1970) have recorded 'slaty black or plumbeous' for the Indian race *H. c. vidali*. The colours may, of course, have changed if they were recorded some hours after death by the collectors, but in the study skins before me now, a colour difference can still be seen to exist between the bills of *H. c. kalbaensis* and the other subspecies mentioned.

*Field characters.* Colour transparencies taken by W. Wyper at the type locality of *H. c. kalbaensis* shows the white superciliary eye strip is quite distinctive in the field.

The species *H. chloris* is distributed over a wide geographical area and about 49 subspecies are at present recognised. It extends from the Red Sea coast (*abyssinica*) at the western extremity of its range, to eastern Arabia (*kalbaensis*), southern Asia, the Philippines and the Malay Archipelago, New Guinea, northern Australia, and through the Polynesian islands to Samoa, which is the extreme eastern limit of its range. Mayr (1931) remarked that often the birds at the periphery of the distribution of a species show pronounced differences in appearance, and this is true of *abyssinica* and its nearest geographical neighbour, the new subspecies *kalbaensis*. These 2 can be distinguished from all the other subspecies by clearly defined differences. For example, in some races various shades of buff replace or tint parts of the pure white areas of plumage found in *kalbaensis* and *abyssinica*. A few other forms have, like *kalbaensis* and *abyssinica*, the light parts white rather than buff but differ from them either by having the white superciliary stripe absent, or shorter, (except *kalbaensis*) or by having extensive areas of white on the crown as in *pealei* from Samoa. Other races show differences in size and overall plumage coloration. This strongly suggests that the affinities of



*kalbaensis* lie closer to the west, *abyssinica*, than to *vidali*, or other subspecies from the eastern part of the *H. chloris* range.

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## A new subspecies of *Diglossa (carbonaria) brunneiventris* by Gary R. Graves

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While investigating the Carbonated Flower-piercer *Diglossa carbonaria* complex, Zimmer (1929) stated "... I am not able, therefore, to separate the Colombian and Peruvian birds *brunneiventris* even subspecifically except on the sole ground of geographic isolation, which is not adequate for racial distinction, and . . . the size of the Colombian specimens falls well within the range of variation of my Peruvian specimens". Subsequent treatments of this group (Hellmayr 1935, Vuilleumier 1969) have maintained *brunneiventris* as a polytopic subspecies with disjunct populations at the north ends of the Western and Central Cordilleras in northern Colombia some 1500 km north of its extensive Peruvian range.

During a reappraisal (Graves 1980) of the *D. carbonaria* superspecies, I examined 358 specimens of *brunneiventris* including some 40 individuals from Colombia. These latter birds appear to be subspecifically distinct. I propose to call them

### *Diglossa brunneiventris vuilleumieri* subsp. nov.

*Type:* United States National Museum No. 436798; adult male, testes enlarged; collected by M. A. Carriker, Jr. at Paramo Frontino, Department of Antioquia, Colombia, elevation 11,880 ft (c. 3620 m), on 21 August 1951.